

Co-chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Currey, Ranking Members Representative McCarty and Representative Berthel, and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

My name is Perla Vanessa Cardoso, I am a parent to a one year old toddler, a daughter to Mexican immigrants from Puebla, Mexico, a resident from New Britain and an organizer with CT Students for a Dream, a youth led organization that fights for the rights of undocumented youth and their families. I am here to testify in support of S.B. 1095: An Act Concerning School Resource Officers.

All students deserve to feel safe, secure, and supported in their places of learning. Yet too often our schools rely on policing to keep children in line, rather than funding professionals trained to deliver students necessary developmental and behavioral health resources.

I graduated from New Britain Public School back in 2012. New Britain is the second to last lowest funded district in Connecticut. Even though we're second to last, we had a new cop car parked in the front of the school with the colors of our school, maroon and gold. On top of that, we also have a holding cell where they'd put students when there would be a fight or in a similar situation. Throughout my career as an organizer, students in New Britain need more resources. Currently, Ukrainian students and Arabic speaking students are arriving and there aren't enough translators for them. Some students I've met, have to take it upon themselves to translate for their classmates which sets them behind on their own school work. Think of all the money that would benefit these students from re-allocating the funds from SRO's in our schools. There are currently 4 social workers in the high school with the population being 2,000+. 1 out of the 4 social workers are Spanish speaking when the population of the high school are majority Hispanic/ Latine.

We need to end the school to prison pipeline and equip educators with the proper resources to teach children in a safe, inclusive environment.

I strongly support S.B. 1095. I hope the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will vote in favor of this bill. Together, we can build an educational system that centers students' social-emotional well-being through care, resources, learning, and restoration. Research shows that students who were diverted to social services or school officials rather than arrested were 2.4 less likely to offend than students who were arrested for engaging in similar behavior.

Thank you for your time,

Perla Cardoso